

STATE OF MICHIGAN

BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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In the matter, on the Commission's own motion,	)	
to consider the restructuring of the electric	)	Case No. U-11290
utility industry.	)	
_____	)	

At the January 8, 1998 meeting of the Michigan Public Service Commission in Lansing, Michigan.

PRESENT: Hon. John G. Strand, Chairman  
Hon. John C. Shea, Commissioner  
Hon. David A. Svanda, Commissioner

**ORDER AND NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT**

On June 5, 1997, the Commission issued an order that set a schedule for phasing in competition in the electric utility industry. As part of the order, the Commission directed the Commission Staff (Staff) to research certain issues necessary to assuring a truly competitive market and to providing all customers with the opportunity to benefit from the introduction of competition.

At page 45 of the order, the Commission provided the following direction:

The advent of direct access may require the development of new programs designed to assist customers. For more than 20 years, the Commission has had billing practice rules designed to protect the rights of customers in their dealings with utilities. These rules need to be examined to determine if they should apply to direct access suppliers or if the billing practices need modifications.

In addition, in order to make efficient use of the direct access program, customers will need access to sufficient and reliable information in order to be able to compare and select among products and services provided in the

electricity market. These include: (1) general information regarding the nature of the direct access program, (2) details regarding the prices and specific services being offered by suppliers, and (3) the sources of power generation and other information that the customers may need about the supplier. In consultation with interested parties, the Staff should review existing billing practices and available sources of customer information, and report to the Commission within 120 days regarding any needed changes in the billing practices or new customer information programs. [Footnotes omitted.]

June 5, 1997 order, Case No. U-11290, p. 45.

After conducting initial research, the Staff sent out letters on June 23, 1997 inviting all interested parties to attend a public meeting to discuss questions related to customer focus issues. Numerous parties attended the meeting, which was held on July 15, 1997 in Lansing. A transcript of the meeting was filed in the Case No. U-11290 docket file, and written comments were accepted for several weeks after the meeting.

The Staff used the comments, in addition to other research, to develop a report entitled "Customer Focus Issues and Recommendations," which was filed with the Commission on October 13, 1997. Shortly thereafter, the Staff mailed copies of the report to all parties of record. The report is also available on the Michigan Public Service Commission website at <http://ermisweb.cis.state.mi.us/mpsc/electric/restruct/reports.htm>.

The Commission finds merit in many of the recommendations in the customer focus report. However, before taking any action, the Commission wishes to receive comments and suggestions from interested parties about the recommendations. Therefore, public comments will be accepted for filing until March 9, 1998.

The Commission FINDS that:

a. Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; MSA 22.151 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.51 et seq.; MSA 22.1 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; MSA 22.13(1) et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; MSA 3.560(101) et seq.; and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1992 AACRS, R 460.17101 et seq.

b. Written comments on the Staff report, "Customer Focus Issues and Recommendations," should be filed on or before March 9, 1998.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that written comments on the Staff report, "Customer Focus Issues and Recommendations," shall be filed on or before March 9, 1998.

The Commission reserves jurisdiction and may issue further orders as necessary.

MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

( S E A L )

/s/ John G. Strand  
Chairman

By its action of January 8, 1998.

/s/ John C. Shea  
Commissioner

/s/ Dorothy Wideman  
Executive Secretary

/s/ David A. Svanda Its  
Commissioner

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b. Written comments on the Staff report, "Customer Focus Issues and Recommendations," should be filed on or before March 9, 1998.

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Case No. U-11290

Suggested Minute:

“Adopt and issue order dated January 8, 1998 providing a notice of opportunity to file written comments on the Commission Staff's report, ‘Customer Focus Issues and Recommendations,’ as set forth in the order.”